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Special Libraries Association

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Minutes of the Special Libraries Association

Asbury Park, N. J., June 28 and 30, 1916

FIRST SESSION

June 28, 1916, a. m.

The eighth annual meeting of the Special Libraries Association was called to order by the President, Andrew Linn Bostwick, in the Palm Room of the New Monterey at 9:30 a m.

The reading of the minutes of the seventh annual meeting at Haines Fall, N. Y, was dispensed with.

President Bostwick gave a brief resumé of the activities of the Association during the year.

Owing to the absence of Mr. D. C. Buell of Omaha who was to have read a paper entitled "Sources of Information for the Business Man," the paper was read by Mr. Samuel Ranck of Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dr. C. C. Williamson, Municipal Reference Librarian, New York City, presented a paper entitled "The Public Official and the Special Library."

This was followed by a brief discussion of a printed paper entitled "Standardization by a Library Unit System," by Mr. G. W. Lee, Librarian, Stone & Webster, Inc., Boston, Mass. Copies of the printed paper were distributed by Mr. Lee.

Miss Rhea King, Librarian of the Retail Credit Co., read a very interesting paper on "The System Used by the Library of the Retail Credit Co., to Develop Employees."

"The Editorial Office a New Field for Librarians" was the title of a paper given by Miss Renee B. Stern of the Mother's Magazine, Elgin, Ill.

In the absence of C. R. Woodruff, Chairman of the Committee on a National Center of Municipal Information, the report of the Committee was read by the President of the Association Action was deferred until the final business session.

SECOND SESSION

June 28, 1916, p. m.

The second session was called to order by the President in the parlor of the Columbia Hotel. This meeting was given over to a series of round table discussions, a half hour being devoted to each of five subjects. Miss Elizabeth V. Dobbins presided at the discussion of the "Treatment of Pamphlets." Mr. D. N. Handy led the conference on "Special Libraries Employees." Miss Marion R. Glenn conducted the "Classification Systems" round table. Mr. H. H. B. Meyer had charge of "Co-operation in Bibliographical Work," and "Special Library Publicity" was handled by Mr. Brainerd Dyer.

At the close of these discussions the meeting adjourned to Friday, 9:30 a. m.

THIRD SESSION

June 30, 1916, a. m.

The President called the third session to order in the parlor of the Columbia Hotel at 9:30 a. m.

Mr. Kenneth C. Walker, Technology Librarian, Carnegie Library, Pittsburg, read a paper entitled "Co-operation Between Special Libraries and the Engineering Profession."

"The Public Affairs Information Service" was discussed by Mr. John A. Lapp.

Mr. Ralph L. Powers, Librarian, College of Business Administration, Boston University, presented a paper, "The Special Library and the Student of Business."

Mr. Frederick Rex, Librarian of the Municipal Reference Library, of Chicago, was not able to be present to deliver his paper on "The Municipal Reference Library as a Public Utility." A typewritten copy of the paper was in the hands of the President and on the recommendation of the Association the paper was ordered printed in Special Libraries.

"The Work of the Detroit Edison Co. Library" was presented by Miss Maud A. Carabin, Librarian of the Company.

FOURTH SESSION

June 30, 1916, p. m.

The annual business meeting was held in the Palm Room of the New Monterey at 2 p. m. President Bostwick in the chair.

The Secretary-Treasurer presented the report of the financial condition of the Association, and the report was accepted

On the report of the Nominating Committee, the following officers were elected for the ensuing year:

President, F. N. Norton, Philadelphia.

Vice-President, Dr. C. C. Williamson, New York City.

Secretary-Treasurer, John A. Lapp, Indianapolis.

Member of the Executive Board, Elizabeth V. Dobbins, New York City.

[Owing to the prolonged illness of Mr. Morton, he has, since the meeting, been compelled to resign the Presidency and his successor has not yet been chosen]

The by-laws were amended so as to permit the Ex-President of the Association to be a member of the Executive Board.

The Committee on Clippings was continued with instructions to present a final report at the 1917 meeting.

ADJOURNED SESSION
June 30, 1916, p. m.

A committee of three, consisting of Miss Glenn, chairman, Mr. Lapp and Miss Dobbins was appointed by the Chair to act as a committee on Relation of Business Libraries to Industrial Organizations..

It was expressed as the sense of the Special Libraries Association that of the three plans proposed by the Committee on National Center for Municipal Information, the so-called second plan or the development of the Public Affairs Information Service gives the most promise and that the committee be asked if it is feasible to work out a plan along this line.

J. CUNNINGHAM,
Secretary.

The Public Official and the Special Library*

By C C. Williamson, Ph. D.. Municipal Reference Librarian, New York City

It has taken a great deal of courage to keep the promise I made to our President several weeks ago to read a paper on "The Public Official and the Special Library." I say it takes a great deal of courage to come here and tell you what I think about public officials and special libraries, because I have nothing to say which you do not already know, which has not already been said better than I can say it. Any ideas which I may have are commonplace to all special librarians. If I could tell you that I do not approve of the special library movement, that the public business cannot be helped by the library, that we are all on the wrong track, I am sure you would be interested, at least, and might get some stimulus. In discussing this subject before an audience of special librarians, I am in a position to appreciate Mr. G. K. Chesterton's saying that "The most dreadful conclusion a literary man can come to is the conclusion that the ordinary view is the right one. It is the last and wildest kind of courage," he says, "that can stand on a tower before ten thousand people and tell them that twice two is four."

The special library is rapidly coming to the point where it will be considered an indispensable part of every large business or other enterprise. In the process of specialization within the organization we find a tendency for related or similar activities to become integrated. In this way a business develops an accounting department, an engineering department, a purchasing department, a sales department, a legal department, and so on. In exactly the same way the need for well organized and efficient information service is producing a distinct department which is usually called, for want of a better name, the library. Insurance companies, banks, laundries, public utilities, manufacturing concerns and many other kinds of business organizations have established libraries, not from sentimental motives, but because it has become apparent that a library is, under present conditions, an essential element for business success. The special library is purely utilitarian, a labor-saving, profit-increasing device. The wide-awake executive, who has taken the place of the hard headed business man, has the same need for a librarian that he has for engineers, attorneys, accountants and all the other specialists who are required in the modern business organization. A business librarian exclaimed to me not long ago that her employers had no respect at all for a library. "Why," said she, "if I do not have what they want off comes my head!" Certainly! Why not? If an accountant cannot construct a balance sheet, or a salesman cannot sell goods, should his head not come off? Respect for a business library will be in direct proportion to its utility in the business.

Unfortunately, it is not an easy matter to figure the exact share of the profits which should be credited to the library. A bit of information produced at the right moment may be worth thousands of dollars to the concern, and although it may not stand on

* Address delivered at the annual meeting of the Special Libraries Association, Asbury Park, June 28, 1916. Other papers will appear in succeeding numbers.

the books to the credit of the library, it is not likely to be entirely overlooked. No business corporation will hesitate to invest large sums in equipment and salaries for a library if it can be shown that it pays.

After all it is far easier to measure results in the special library than in the general library, and this is what makes special library work so interesting and attractive. As a rule we have a definite clientele of persons who seek for definite facts. In the general public library there is no definite responsibility to any one class of patrons. The business man may not find there what he wants, but the librarian excuses himself for his inefficiency on the ground that the general library is not designed primarily to serve business men and they should therefore be thankful for any help they can get from it. The engineer, the chemist, the accountant, the artist, the newspaper writer, may not find just what they want either; but what of it? It is a general library, and cannot be expected to serve specialists. Under cover of its general character it is possible for a library to hide an astonishing amount of inefficiency and lack of adaptation to the real needs of the community to which it looks for respect and financial support. The world's work today is carried on by specialists. The plumber, the electrician, as well as the artist and the inspector of sewers is a specialist. A library which does not strive to serve the specialist acceptably has a pitifully small and uninteresting field.

We special librarians should be thankful that it is possible to know day by day whether our work is a success or a failure. It is like the work of the soldier and the lawyer. "Some professions," says a gifted contemporary, "require a certain crystalline realism, especially about results. Such professions are the soldier and the lawyer; these give ample opportunity for crimes but not much for mere illusions. If you have composed a bad opera, you may persuade yourself that it is a good one; if you have carved a bad statue you can think yourself better than Michael Angelo. But if you have lost a battle, you cannot believe you have won it; if your client is hanged you cannot pretend that you got him off." The special librarian is not likely to labor under the delusion that he has done all that could be expected of him, even though he has done nothing at all.

The extension of the special library has been somewhat retarded, I fancy, because it has not seemed possible to find a term which more accurately describes it. The average man of affairs understands a library to be a collection of books, all full of impractical theories or out of date. Even if he is a college graduate he may be pardoned for supposing that a library is principally a collection of text books and belle-lettres, useful for training and recreation, but not likely to be of much use in a fellow's daily work. The adjective special can naturally have no meaning to him in this connection.

I have sometimes thought that it would be advantageous in many ways if for the institution we now call the special library we could find a term that avoids the use of the word library altogether. Data file or information bureau, for example, although doubtless objectionable in other ways, would at least have the advantage of not connoting the only kind of a library with which the average person is familiar. I have frequently been informed by business concerns that they have no library, but only a filing department which cares for their clippings, circulars, reports and other data which are necessary in their particular business. They have no need, they tell me, of a librarian for their filing clerk takes care of what few books they have. Happy is the special librarian who can hold the title of filing clerk! Business executives appreciate the value of a skilful filing clerk and pay her perhaps $2,000 to $3,000, whereas if she were called librarian she would probably not be worth more than half that amount. As a matter of fact, the filing department may actually be what we have been forced to call a special library. The trouble is that the common conception of a library is a series of shelves of bound volumes. Now the special library is special, or different, because it is not primarily a collection of books It may be made up almost wholly of such material as maps, drawings, blue prints, photographs, trade papers and trade catalogues, clippings, reports, pamphlets, specifications and forms of all sorts.

Advantage should be taken of this opportunity to supplement the inadequate definition of a special library which I made some years ago and which I find Mr. Johnston has quoted in his chapter on "Special Libraries" in the A. L. A. Manual of Library Economy. A library may be special, even though it is not confined to the literature of a particular subject. It may cover a very wide range of subjects, although organized from the special point of view of the business or the special class of persons it is designed to serve. The library which is special in this sense is also in charge of a person who is controlled by its particular view point, who knows what its problems are, and what is important and unimportant, and who may even become helpful to the specialist in his own field.

The libraries which in the last few years have grown up in connection with the public business are special in the sense that they cater to a particular clientage, that they proceed from a special point of view, rather than that they deal with a special set of subjects, for, as a matter of fact, the business of government touches, first and last, nearly every private business and all the interests of life. Special libraries for public officials are of two kinds—known as legislative reference and municipal reference li-

braries. The former which has spread so rapidly in the last decade that it is now operating in a majority of states, aims primarily to furnish information and assistance to the members of the state legislatures. In a few cases these libraries have gone beyond their original object and are now also actively engaged in supplying a library service to the officials and employees of the administrative departments of the state When the special library idea was first applied to the work of the municipality it became known as a municipal reference library. In the beginning it, too, was designed principally to work with the council, the legislative branch of the city government, in the framing of ordinances and other business of the city council. Some of the most active and useful municipal reference libraries are still primarily serving the council, its committees and officers, but most of those first established and probably all the later ones are now even more closely associated with administrative officials in all departments.

The term municipal reference library, like the term special library itself, is open to objection as not accurately descriptive and somewhat misleading. We find in New York that most people are surprised to learn that our library is not confined to subjects which pertain to municipal government in the narrow sense. The functions and activities of various departments of the municipality are so varied as to require officials and employees to delve in practically every science and art. Every branch of engineering except perhaps mining has to be represented in our files. The regulatory and inspectional services of the health and other departments take us daily into the literature of nearly every trade and profession. The library is, therefore, a special municipal library not simply on account of the character of some of the material we handle, but rather because it is all designed for the use of the municipal officials.

Information required in the organization and management of a repair shop, specifications and tests for reinforced concrete construction, prices of building materials, a work on analytical mechanics, the nautical almanac, interest tables, a manual on automobiles, a treatise on refrigeration—these and hundreds of other things which are in no sense municipal are needed by municipal officials and it is the library's special business to supply them

The word reference is also a handicap at times because it implies to most people who know anything about libraries that material cannot be borrowed, but must be used in the library. I have already explained that the word library does not connate for the ordinary man of affairs the variety of materials and services which a special library supplies. One of the tasks of a municipal reference library is therefore to show to its potential patrons the new and extended meaning to be attached to all three words in its cumbrous and misleading name.

A properly conducted municipal reference library is in reality a bureau of economy and efficiency; it performs that function principally in saving the time and energy, not only of the high salaried officials, but of the whole body of employees. Personal service is the largest item in a municipal budget. More is expended every year in salaries than in cost of plant or cost of materials, and yet very little thought is given in most cities to methods of economizing the time and increasing the output even of the most highly paid officials.

Although in municipal business there is doubtless considerable waste in materials and supplies which would not be tolerated in a private corporation, such waste is insignificant when compared with the waste of personal services. It is difficult for a public employee to realize the meaning of the old adage that "time is money," that the community does not pay him and his fellow workers for merely recording their presence, but for the work they do, the results they accomplish. An employee whose conscience would not permit him to waste a postage stamp or a lead pencil will waste hours of his own time and more hours of the time of his fellow workers without realizing what he is doing.

A simple fact like the full name and address of a person in some distant city or the name of some state or municipal official in another part of the country can be had from the library by simply using the telephone. Few municipal offices can afford to keep at hand up-to-date information of that sort, yet to get it in the old-fashioned way when needed is costly, even though it wastes the time only of clerks and stenographers. In all the more complicated and comprehensive inquiries the savings which can be effected through the library are still greater.

Even with an adequate and efficient library service in the city hall a great deal of labor is expended in collecting data which is already at hand and available for the asking. In one of our eastern states a special commission to investigate the subject of pensions for state and municipal officers furnishes a typical illustration of the haphazardness and wastefulness of most official information getting. This commission very frankly states that it had intended to address letters to various municipalities and to officials of the several states, but did not do so because through the courtesy of the Legislative Bureau of the State Library, it was learned that the whole subject had been investigated, at a large expense, by a committee of the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and that this committee presented a voluminous report which had been published. "In view of the great amount of work which has been done by the Massachusetts Commission," the explanation

continues, "and of the fact that their report is to be found in our State Library and therefore accessible to the members of the legislature, and also in view of the fact that the joint resolution under which we were appointed did not contemplate a large outlay, we decided not to attempt to do much more than sound the sentiment of the people of this state upon the question." Perhaps if the money had been available to duplicate the investigation already made elsewhere, the commission would have rebuked the state librarian for offering information he was not asked for. At all events, it is clear that the special library makes unnecessary most of the junketing trips and miscellaneous letter writing so freely indulged in by a type of public official not yet extinct, but happily becoming rare in some localities.

The manager of a western city tells us that in order to arrive at the most satisfactory method of cleaning streets, officials must study past methods, the methods of other cities, etc. "In the past," he says, "instead of scientifically investigating their problems, they sent out laymen repeatedly on 'junketing tours.' Had they stayed at home and applied the money towards hiring a trained man to solve the problem, that one man could have referred to his text books, different technical magazines, with their tables of data, applied the principles most fittingly to the local conditions and the matter would have been successfully handled." In other words, this city manager believes that the efficient method of solving problems is to employ officials who know how to read and then give them a municipal reference library.

The library should not only economize the time of officials and employees in the routine process of getting together the bare facts of many kinds which are required in the administration of any department, but it should also provide for the officials in executive positions an opportunity to keep abreast of progress, at least in their particular field. The highest type of executive is also a student. He not only knows how to judge men and manage them, but he is also a master of ideas. He need not be an originator of ideas, but he must be a past master in the art of appropriating the ideas of others and adapting them to the solution of his own problems. This does not mean that he must spend a great deal of time in wading through the tons of print to keep abreast of his subject. Much of that can be done by subordinates and most of all by the library, which sifts the vast flow of literature and indexes it or digests it in such a way that the busy official can be sure of getting the latest and most authoritative information without loss of time.

It is probable that, on the whole, public officials do not keep as well informed in regard to the latest developments and general progress in their special province as do officials of similar rank in private business organizations. The principal reason for this is, of course, that their positions are often political. Too often they are not appointed because of their technical qualifications but because of their political power. The expert in public office will make the fullest use of the library, but even without it he will manage in some way to get the information he needs. The politician in public office needs the library most of all.

The executive who complains that he does not have time to read reveals his unfitness for executive positions. He confesses, in the first place, that he is incapable of organizing his work so as to keep his own mind reasonably free from details which can be delegated to assistants, and he also proves that he is sure to be behind the times. No one can entertain new ideas who does not have time to study and think. It has been wisely said that "everything done in a hurry is certain to be antiquated."

An ancient proverb holds that "knowledge is power," and this for our present purpose should be coupled with a very modern near proverb to the effect that "Hot air will take a balloon up a long way, but power is required to direct its course." Other things being the same, the man who knows most about the business in hand will win and this is true even in the public business and even in that branch of the public business which is supposed to be most subject to questionable political influence occurs a splendid illustration. I refer to the congressional rivers and harbors appropriation bill, and to Theodore E. Burton, who so mastered the subject of rivers and harbors that as long as he was Chairman of the Committee no amendment was ever voted to which he did not agree By way of explanation of his remarkable power in the House, Mr Burton once said: "You should remember that the man who hopes to succeed in Congress must know, when he arises to speak, more about the subject to which he addresses himself than does any other member. If his information is only the average of the House he fails utterly to make an impression. "This," he added, "is not only so in respect to appropriations, but is true of everything else."

The public official who knows, who bases his conclusions upon accurate information, will make few mistakes and few poor decisions. In the process of acquiring a mastery of the business in hand, whatever it may be, the public official should find the special library his most dependable aid.

The special library, as an essential part of an up-to-date business organization, has evolved in part from the small collection of books, catalogues, reports and various sources of information which the executive formerly kept in, on, or about his desk. The desk of the modern executive has undergone a remarkable transformation It is no longer

a many storied structure of pigeon holes, drawers, and files innumerable. To-day it is a simple flat topped table with perhaps a drawer or two which are not supposed to contain anything. Letters and papers of all kinds have gone to the files in charge of a file clerk and perhaps to a huge central filing department. When he wants anything he asks for it, while his mind is free from the distraction and relieved of the burden of remembering in what part of the desk this or that letter or document was carefully tucked away against the time when it might be wanted

The evolution of the executive's desk and the development of modern correspondence filing systems is now being paralleled in the evolution of the entire office, and the establishment of the special library. The pigeon holes and desk files have disappeared and now the precious office book case and report files are doomed Under the new regime the executive has learned to drop letters and memoranda into the basket labeled file and to forget them until they are wanted, when they come back to him with a certainty and promptness never attained under the old system, with all its painful waste of energy Now the executive is also learning to send all printed matter on to the library and to trust that when he wants the report it will come back and perhaps with it a great deal more and more useful data than his office book case or his desk memoranda file could ever be made to yield Just as he now rings for the file clerk when he wants that letter he received from John Jones last month, he is learning to call the library for the report that was issued by X Y Z Company two or three years ago, or the magazine article he saw somewhere a while back, or an up-to-date set of specifications for this, or the latest information obtainable on that, important commodity. And if the library service is efficient, he will get what he wants with a fraction of the time and energy with which it could be produced in the old way

I wish to avoid giving the impression that public officials are just beginning to make use of information. Intelligent and capable officials have always sought to base their action and judgments on the fullest and best information obtainable. But in recent years municipal problems and activities have grown enormously in magnitude and complexity, so that the official finds it more difficult than ever before to keep fully informed in regard to conditions and problems for which he is responsible. Moreover, standards of efficiency demanded in both public and private business are higher than ever before. To aid the official in meeting this situation the special library has developed as an agency for gathering data on every subject in which he may be interested and putting it before him in a form which will give him what he needs with the least effort The special library, in other words, represents a specialization of function to secure efficiency and economy.

The municipal reference library occupies in a municipal organization a position not unlike that of a central purchasing department, a law department, or a central engineering department. It would be possible, of course, for each separate city department to have a legal staff or a legal adviser of its own, but such a method is so obviously wasteful and inefficient that, so far as I know, every city in the country has a centralized legal division. Every official and every department may be in need of legal service at any moment, but it is not necessary on that account to have in every department a corps of specialists in different branches of the law. When in need of legal advice the official turns to the department of law, the corporation counsel, city attorney, or city solicitor, as he is variously styled In precisely the same way a central library service can most adequately, most economically and most efficiently meet the needs of all departments.

Were each department of the city government to attempt to maintain its own library the result would inevitably be a very meagre and inadequate service, or else it would entail an unwarranted expense. While the truth of this statement must be perfectly apparent, I venture to illustrate the point more concretely. A single library for a dozen departments has, let us say, an annual budget of $24,000. This provides for a staff of experienced and skilled librarians and an organization which can cover the whole world in collecting the latest and best data on the questions which confront the officials. It can equip itself with everything that any department may need and can provide a telephone and messenger service so that the central library is in every essential respect as accessible as a small departmental library. But instead of spending the $24,000 for an efficient central library, let us divide it among the twelve departments, giving them an average of $2,000 each. The only possible result would be an inferior and inadequate service and a vast amount of needless duplication.

The administration of every city of considerable size, if at all wide awake and intelligent, requires accurate and detailed information on an astonishingly wide range of subjects. Every branch of engineering, except perhaps mining, has important applications in connection with public works, public utilities, fire prevention, and many other functions Both practical and theoretical data are constantly required by those in charge of educational and social services, including the manifold constructive measures now being taken in caring for the city's wards and the farsighted program of preventive measures to safeguard the public health. Problems of unemployment, city planning, financial administration and ac-

counting have to be studied in the light of experience. In the solution of these and many other problems the library can be of the utmost utility. Extensive and up-to-date trade information is required, for it is difficult to think of a commodity which the city does not have to buy.

In all these directions, and others too numerous to mention here, the library should stand ready to put at the service of public officials the achievements of scientific investigation and the results of experience in both private and public business. The municipal reference library is not designed to promote original research in scientific or administrative domains; it aims rather to seek out and make available the results of such research. In other words, it serves as an intermediary between the scientist, the inventor and the scholar on one hand, and the administrator on the other

No official could possibly examine or even collect an appreciable part of the torrent of printed matter which is poured forth on every subject in which he is interested. Hundreds of periodicals, reports and proceedings of innumerable societies, official and unofficial reports in scores of cities pour in upon us. It requires the undivided attention of a special department, the library, to watch this torrent and to snatch from it anything that may be of value in the city's business.

It is a gross misconception of the significance of a municipal reference library to question its right to be, on the ground that it represents unnecessary duplication. Grant that much of the material which goes to equip the municipal reference library is duplicated in the general library. The special library is much more than the few tools it uses. Perhaps it does find it necessary to draw its materials from every field of knowledge Nevertheless it is not duplicating work already being done, for it organizes its materials from a special point of view so that they become an integral part of a service; and that service rather than the tools and materials is the Library. A homely illustration will help to make my point more clear. Exactly the same kind and quantity of materials may go into the construction of a church and a hotel The two buildings may stand side by side, yet we do not say there is wasteful duplication. The two structures having very different objects to serve are constructed on a radically different plan It is possible to worship in a hotel and one can eat and sleep in a church, but under ordinary conditions we do not consider it undesirable or wasteful to provide both. It is possible to force a general library to function as a municipal reference library and up to a certain point a municipal reference library may serve the general public, but the result in either case will prove to be unsatisfactory. They may be built of the same materials, but their plan and purpose are different, and they operate under different rules and regulations.

This simple illustration of the difference between a special and a general library will also help to answer the question as to how extensive a collection the special library should have and how much it should rely on borrowing as the occasion demands. This is a troublesome matter to which no definitive and general answer can be given. Very much depends on local conditions Experience is the only safe guide. Those who would put a librarian in a bare room with a telephone are just as much in error as those who would go to the other extreme and try to have at hand everything that could conceivably be needed. Consideration of space, the ease and promptness with which material can be borrowed, the money available for purchases, the amount and variety of reference work to be done, are some of the controlling considerations

The practice and policy of the general public library has hitherto been guided largely by the needs of those who have time to leave their work and go to it. The scholar can ordinarily wait until tomorrow or next week or until the book he wants is available. The person who reads for recreation or general education is likewise not seriously disadvantaged by delays. But in the more practical affairs of public and private business the library is of small value unless it can go to the reader. A question comes up during a meeting of a board of directors and must be answered if possible before they adjourn, a contract is about to be signed, a letter is being written, a hearing is to be held on a certain date, but officials who would gladly avail themselves of all information can not put aside other duties and go to the library to search for the data they need. The special library is in a position to assist by taking to the official the precise information wanted. If, however, the librarian merely knows that in such and such a volume in some other library the data may be found, his helpfulness may be nil, for the book may be on the reference shelf and not to be borrowed or it may be out in circulation and not subject to recall for a week or two. An active municipal reference library which depends for much of its resources on general public libraries soon finds that it disappoints its clients and wastes the time and energy of its staff in fruitless efforts to gather in material after it is actually called for. So many of the calls made upon the library are of an emergency and hurry-up character that it proves to be economical to have in its own collection the cream of the literature on subjects which are known to be of vital importance in the city's business. I refer to a single case, picked from many of the sort which have come under my observation. An explosion in a subway excavation causes the street above to collapse

with much loss of life and property. An immediate investigation is ordered to determine what was the cause and who was to blame. It is not desirable to have such an investigation made solely by those who are doing the work nor by those who are supervising it. An official assigned to the task is without engineering training and wholly unacquainted with the subject. The library is asked for literature on tunnelling and different problems of subway excavation, for treatises on the geology and rock formation of that particular area. In a few minutes these are in his hands and by working most of the night the trained mind of the lawyer has mastered the subject. The next day he conducts the hearing as if he had been an engineer all his life and even forces so-called experts to admit that their knowledge is less full and exact than his own.

As the subject which I was asked to discuss is "Public Officials and the Special Library," I shall not take up the relation of the municipal reference library to the rank and file of municipal employees. In passing, it may be noted, however, that the library is in a position to make an important contribution to the efficiency of the public service by offering employees an opportunity to fit themselves for advancement. The opportunity in this direction is so large that the library might even become a real training school for the public service. The merit system of selecting and promoting all municipal employees, even those of the very highest rank, furnishes plenty of incentive to study The library can furnish the opportunity and by co-operating with the civil service commission can do a great deal to provide a body of employees trained for their special duties not only by experience, but by study.

In addition to its primary function of supplying the data required by officials, the existing libraries perform a variety of services. A number of them, for instance, by law, ordinance or custom, are distributing agencies for city documents. In some cities the library has sole charge of this work, while in others it merely receives a quota of each document to be used in its exchanges. In many cities the distribution of documents is conducted in a wasteful and haphazard manner, for too often they are not distributed at all or are sent out promiscuously and fail to reach those who would be able to use them. Document distribution should be centralized in some office that has the facilities for bringing each publication to the attention of those who may be interested in it. Central distribution of documents need not be in the hands of the municipal reference library, yet that would usually seem to be the most feasible plan, for several reasons. The library is probably more familiar with the scope and contents of all the city's publications than any other department; that is its business.

The library must keep up its own collection of the documents of other cities and states and it expects to be carried on the mailing lists of many organizations and publishers who would be glad to receive certain documents by way of exchange. Every report sent outside of the city should carry with it an implied promise on the part of the recipient to return the favor in kind. These exchange accounts can doubtless be managed most advantageously through the library, because it is the only department which is familiar with all the publications of all departments, but also for the reason that it specializes in classifying and indexing and therefore has the facilities for keeping a complete set of mailing lists accurate and up-to-date. Now and then some official has worked out an excellent system of distribution for his own reports, but he would not be permitted, nor would he consent, to use his machinery for other departments.

The attitude of a few officials toward any scheme of central distribution makes it impractical in most cities. The handing out of his own printed reports, and even the reports of his predecessor in office, is often looked upon as precious personal prerogative not to be surrendered for any consideration.

Closely related to the matter of document distribution is the broader function of the library as a publicity agent, an effective intermediary between the public officials and the citizen public. Municipal reference libraries have for the most part been engaged in gathering information for official use. It is possible, not to say probable, that they may in the future play an equally important role as a means of communication between the official and the public. Undoubtedly one of the weakest points in municipal administration is the failure on the part of officials to secure an effective publicity for their work. This is forcibly brought out in Professor Munro's recent work on "Municipal Administration." One of three primary requisites for an efficient municipal administration he finds to be intelligent citizenship "The propulsive power in municipal reform," he says, "as in all other fields of civic improvement must come from below. Men cannot register their minds at the polls unless they have minds to register, and the voter who makes up his mind without information is no source of strength or wisdom to any government." The average voter can be brought to a more intelligent understanding of how the city's business is and should be done by more publicity, by getting the facts of city administration into his mind. Few American cities, however, have any effective means of giving the voter the information he should have The only solution Professor Munro offers, however, is an improvement of the annual reports of city departments, but it

must be apparent that effective publicity is not achieved merely by issuing promptly annual reports which are concise, explicit and easy to interpret. Even these reports must be gotten to the people and perhaps it will become one of the many functions of a municipal library to see that this is done and to see furthermore that still more effective methods of publicity are developed. A suggestion to this effect is conveyed by the name of Pittsburgh's Bureau of Publicity and Municipal Reference Library. The San Francisco Municipal Record carries the statement that it is published weekly by the municipal reference library and that "Its purpose is to preserve in condensed form all that pertains to current history connected with the government of the city and county; to inform the municipal officials and employees as to the transactions of the several departments; to furnish information to taxpayers and to those interested in the study of municipal affairs; to promote the application of scientific principles to municipal government."

In this case it happens that the municipal reference library exists only to secure second class postage rates on the publication, but the objects outlined in this statement are closely akin to the present functions of the active municipal reference libraries. It is also apparent that in other cities the official journals issued for publicity purposes have a close association with the municipal reference work. Public libraries in general have not even begun to realize that they are, or may be, one of the chief agents of publicity in any community.

A new budget procedure adopted by the legislature of New Jersey this year requires the Governor's budget message to be distributed to the press and to all public libraries, thus recognizing the public library as one of the two principal agents of publicity for public affairs.

Among the activities proposed for municipal reference libraries is that of drafting laws, ordinances and regulations. Although bill drafting has come to be one of the important functions of legislative reference libraries, so far as I know municipal reference libraries have not taken it up, nor do I see any reason for their doing so. If an expert bill drafter is to be employed, I should prefer to see him attached to the legal department He should, of course, do his work in the closest co-operation with the library which can supply him with comparative material and technical information, but the actual drafting seems to me not to belong properly to the library under the usual municipal organization. It is a case exactly parallel, I should say, to the drafting of contracts and specifications. While the library may properly collect specifications in use by other cities and by private purchasers, and may furnish much of the technical data needed, it would clearly be outside its function to assume any further responsibility for the form of specifications to be adopted.

All the time allotted to me, and more too, I have now used in attempting to point out some of the ways in which a municipal reference library can be helpful to public officials. It might be worth while also, if time permitted, to ask what officials may do to aid the library to become more efficient and useful. An interesting list of official misconceptions of the library and its problems might also be made, but I will not inflict that upon you for the present at least.

Public Health Library

The Municipal Reference Library of New York City has just completed plans for establishing a Public Health Division on the fifth floor of the Health Department Building, 139 Centre street. For years the Health Department has had a library which has recently been under the supervision of the Bureau of Public Health Education, but without a librarian in charge. That library will now be taken over by the Municipal Reference Library and developed to meet the special demands of the various bureaus of the department. An increasing use has been made by the Health Department of the service offered by the Municipal Reference Library, but it has not been practicable for the Library, located in the municipal building and out of direct contact with the offices of the department, to specialize as fully as is necessary to give it an adequate library service.

While the Public Health Division will be conducted primarily for the officials and employees of the Health Department, it will be open to the general public for reference use. Following the general rule of the Municipal Reference Library, material will be loaned only to persons on the payroll of the city. It is believed that this will be the only library in the city specializing on public health matters and open to the public. There are, of course, excellent general and special medical libraries, with which the public health division will co-operate as fully as possible, but medical libraries cover the public health field only in part and from a somewhat different point of view.

Miss Sarah N Halliday, Librarian of the Lederle Laboratories, has been appointed assistant in immediate charge of the Public Health Division. As the Lederle Laboratories is a large firm of public health specialists, Miss Halliday's experience fits her admirably for this important position. A small part of the present collection of the Library, of primary interest only in the Health Department, will be transferred to the new division. All publications on file will be subject to temporary transfer as occasion demands.

List of References on the Trade of the United States as Affected by the War

(Supplementary to List Published in Special Libraries, December, 1914)

Compiled Under the Direction of H. H. B. Meyer,
Chief Bibliographer, Library of Congress

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Book Reviews

Advertising, The Social and Economic Problem, by George French. Ronald Press Co., New York, 1915. Price, $2.00 postpaid.

Here is a book on advertising from an altogether new angle. Instead of telling how to write successful advertising copy, and how to sell it after it is written, Mr. French in his book, "Advertising, The Social and Economic Problem," points out the responsibilities of those who create advertising.

"Advertising is a real part of modern life," says Mr. French in his introduction, "there is almost no phase of living that it has not invaded. It is a great factor in progress. It has been a great influence for bad, but in some of its functions it is coming to be a beneficient force. When skillfully applied, it has a power over people which is possessed by no other element of business or social life, and it may be so used as to be one of the great agents of civilization."

Mr. French makes a critical, fair and intelligent survey of the entire field of advertising, and succeeds admirably in his purpose of picturing advertising as it is—and what it does.

There is no doubt but that advertising men, those who write and sell, and advertisers, those who buy, need technical books on their trade, books which give them the experience of others by which to profit. And there is just as much reason why advertising men should read "Advertising, The Social and Economic Problem." It is a book of great value, and is an excellent as well as needed contribution to advertising literature.

Pushing Your Business, by T. D. MacGregor. The Bankers Publishing Co., New York, 1913. Price, $1.50.

It would be difficult indeed for anyone to read T. D. MacGregor's book, "Pushing Your Business," without gaining the impression that here is a book on financial advertising worth anybody's time and money. And let it be known that such an impression would be correct.

T. D. MacGregor, of the Bankers Magazine, is too well-known in the financial advertising field for comment in these columns. Suffice it to say that he has brought to his book the knowledge of actual experience. His work is not based on theories alone.

"Pushing Your Business" deals mostly with the advertising of financial institutions, and is most comprehensive. It ranges from the elemental to the psychological features of advertising. It is a valuable book for the inexperienced as well as the experienced.

Besides the chapters on financial institutions and their advertising, Mr. MacGregor has incorporated in his work several chapters dealing with real estate dealers and insurance companies and agents.

"Pushing Your Business" is in its fifth edition. M. H.

Advertising and Selling, Principles of Appeal and Response, by Harry L. Hollingworth. D. Appleton & Company, 1913. Price, $2.00 net.

In his work, "Advertising and Selling," Harry L. Hollingworth has made a clear and easily understood exposition of many fundamental principles of psychology applying to successful advertising.

The tasks of catching the attention, holding the attention, fixing the impression and provoking the response are presented as being the psychological tasks of an appeal. The author has handled his subjects comprehensively and in a manner making his book easy to read.

That the underlying principles of psychology as worked out by the scientist in his laboratory bear a relation of supreme importance to successful advertising is well-founded now-a-days and is beyond dispute. This work of Mr. Hollingworth strengthens this opinion, and without doubt "Advertising and Selling" would be a valuable, practical acquisition to any advertising or advertiser's library. M. H.

Special Libraries

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The Annual Conference

Many contributions were made to the development of the special library movement, at the Annual Conference held at Asbury Park, June 28-30, 1916, not the least of which was the clearer recognition of the basic purpose of the special library—namely, to put knowledge at work. In every discussion the idea of making knowledge and information function in office, shop and public affairs was dominant. Every paper presented adds materially to the growing literature of the special library movement. The attendance was large and the interest keen.

Aside from the papers and discussions, the Association acted upon several important matters chief of which may be mentioned the matter of a national center for municipal information. A committee report made by Clinton Rogers Woodruff favored strongly the establishment of a national center. Considerable discussion arose as to the best place to establish such a center and the matter was left for further consideration That some definite program will result there is no doubt.

A second matter was that of the part which the special library should play in industrial preparedness. The duty of the special library was evident and a committee was appointed to lend such co-operation as possible to those who are taking stock of our industrial resources.

A further significant matter at the conference centered in the Agricultural Section of the A. L. A. This section recognizes the vital problem of getting agricultural knowledge into action through the extension workers and county agents. In this the closeness of the Agricultural Section to the S. L. A. is apparent and plans are being worked out to have regular contributions from the field of agriculture in Special Libraries.

Proposed International Commercial Bureau.

At a recent meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce in Paris, Mr. William Harper, of Chicago, addressed the members on a project for an international commercial bureau and an international discount association—a subject that had previously been placed before bankers of London and Paris, as well as the London Chamber of Commerce, and was said to be receiving their careful consideration.

The Bureau Commercial International, which would be organized under French laws and have its headquarters in Paris, would also have main offices in London, New York, Petrograd and Milan, and branch offices in twenty-two other cities, while it would have as correspondents commercial organizations in all parts of the world It would act as a universal clearing house for industrial and commercial information obtained from governments, consular and diplomatic officers, official and private commercial organizations, trade publications, and technical and industrial periodicals of all countries. It would prepare lists of manufacturers, producers, and purchasers, grouped according to countries and according to classes of goods; collect trade catalogues and circulars, of which résumés would be translated into the principal commercial languages and distributed; and maintain expositions of samples and models.

Through an international discount association, which it would organize, the International Commercial Bureau would inform manufacturers and buyers who were on its register, concerning the financial status of producers or purchasers in all parts of the world and would indicate the means of negotiating most advantageously their drafts and bills of exchange. The members of the discount association would be banks, which would make available all their information with regard to the financial standing of their customer. The discount association would furnish facilities for discounting commercial paper running for 60, 90, or even 120 days.

[U. S. Commerce Report.]

Special Libraries Association, Eastern District

Report of Proceedings, June 7, 1916

The meeting of the Eastern District of the Special Libraries Association, held on the afternoon and evening of Wednesday, June 7th, at the Social Service Library, was a pronounced success. Thirty-two were present, representing educational, engineering, industrial, public utilities, social and general library interests. Mr. G. W. Lee presided.

L. A. Armistead

Mr. L. A. Armistead, Librarian of the Boston Elevated, spoke on "Interdependence and the Need for a Reservoir Library." He said that he had, in the interests of his organization, used every library in Boston, and that he felt keenly the need for co-operation in the purchase of books. "If you will buy 'A', we shall not need to, but shall do our share of buying 'B.'" Of course, this refers to books that serve special interests, some of which cost $10.00 and upwards, and simply have to be bought by one or more concerns. He says the Boston Elevated has some storage room for itself at one of the terminal stations, but that there lacks a central reservoir library. (The Chairman noted that there were unoccupied shelves, with sufficient space for perhaps five thousand volumes, in the very room in which the meeting was held, and there is likelihood that here may be the nucleus of the much-talked-of reservoir library.) Mr. Armistead emphasized the importance of all indexes, and as a result there is likely soon to be a central registration of the availability of special indexes, like the Readers' Guide, Industrial Arts Index, Street Railway Journal Index, etc., etc.

Ralph A. Power

Mr. Ralph A. Power, Librarian of the Boston University College of Business Administration, spoke on "Problems of a Library in Process of Formation." His problems included those of book selection (need of experts in various departments to vouch for the publications that come within their specialties), of classification, cataloguing, bibliographies, illustrations, research material, etc. He called attention to the need for trained library experience, as well as for knowledge in a special field. Boston University plans to form this coming year a nucleus for a commercial museum in connection with the business library.

Waldo A. Rich

Mr. Waldo A. Rich, Jr., of the Dennison Manufacturing Company, spoke on "Centralization of Merchandise Catalogs." He considered this from the standpoint of the Information Clearing House of Boston (formerly the Boston Co-operative Information Bureau), and in his remarks spoke in part as follows: The Information Clearing House of Boston, now in its fifth year, has had a most successful career among its members. It has not, however, succeeded in giving the service of which its possibilities allow to the large field of business which should be opened to it. This we believe is because it is new, and perhaps ahead of its time. In our own humble business, Grandfather Dennison, when presenting his tags to possible users, met a most skeptical reception, and it was only through giving away many thousands that he was able to gradually build up the business from which now tags go to all parts of the world. The fundamental idea of letting some one else find out for you what you may want to know is simple. All the training of our people has been, however, along the line of finding out for themselves, or as you might express it, "Standing on their own feet." To interest the average person who has managed to find things out, it is therefore difficult to make clear the value and scope of the work of the Clearing House. Its value is first, perhaps, in that it is a time saver; this should mean a saving of money. Then by getting more detailed and complete information than is ordinarily obtained, it should be more valuable. The subject on which the Information Clearing House intends to reach a greater field of service is trade catalogs. It intends to index the specialization of local business in conjunction with a central bureau of merchandise catalogs. We all know how difficult it is to locate some little particular thing which may be wanted for the home or office. It always seems as if any one in that particular business should be able to tell us immediately where it could be found. Business, however, has become so great and so specialized that it is the extremely exceptional man or woman who even knows his own line. You may say, "But all this can be found in a telephone book or in a local or Thomas's Trade Directory." This is not true, because headings used in these must (to be practical) be very broad An engraver, for instance, may be one who works with any one of many substances, as wood, steel, copper plate, or some other material, and under each of these the headings are again divided, as, for instance, an engraver on steel may specialize in cutting dies for printing letter paper, in cutting seals for commercial or personal use, or in cutting for one of the many other uses to which steel is put. Each of these may again be divided until we find an almost

unlimited variety of products listed under the one heading. We cannot begin to enumerate the many lines in which this same variety will be found. The only limits to the field of service for this Information Bureau are those set for it by its users. The centralization of trade catalogs broadens this field somewhat, but you can make it still broader by remembering it as "The place to find out whatever you may want to know in the most modern, simple, practical, quick and economical way." The centralization of trade catalogs in the Clearing House is simply one more step for the service it can render, and is not for a source of profit.

Margaret Watkins

Miss Margaret Watkins, Librarian of the Social Service Library, spoke on "The Possibilities of the Social Service Library." The Social Service Library is a free reference and lending library, consisting of a valuable collection of over 51,000 books, reports, and pamphlets relating to the various movements, educational, medical, philanthropic, and economic, which are broadly classed under the head of Social Service. To the recent graduates of the School for Social Workers the Social Service Library, which for three years has been established in connection with the school, is well known. But perhaps many may not realize that in addition to the direct service given to the students, the library tries to serve the large body of social workers, both professional and volunteer, in Boston and the vicinity. Its doors are open to all who are interested in the social problems of the day and in the efforts being made in every country for their solution. Over twenty years ago the Boston Children's Aid Society realized that there was need for such a library, and began collecting annual reports of societies and institutions, national, state and municipal publications, as well as books on social questions. All these were used continually by social workers of Boston. Now they form the nucleus of the present library, which carries on the same policy, and offers material for the free use of all. The Library would like to reach a larger number of readers. Among those using the library last year were volunteer social workers, professional social workers from the State Board of Charity, the Psychopathic Hospital, the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Boston Associated Charities, trustees of private institutions, and experts in city planning and industrial efficiency. The library is being used intensively, but it will not have fulfilled its purpose until it is used extensively.

Alfred Ela

Mr. Alfred Ela, taking part in the discussion, said: A bit of history may throw light on suggestions tonight that from the periodicals the valuable articles only should be preserved, the remainder being thrown away. Sixty years ago, a Bohemian monk grew different kinds of peas in his convent garden and "rang the changes" on dwarf peas and tall, red and white. The results attained he finally put into a paper published in a little local journal, perhaps the Proceedings of the Natural History Society of Brünn. Any librarian, as we are now advised, would have thrown into the discard these results, but they did not get even so much attention, but slumbered among the dead matter, forgotten for thirty years. The pertinent branch of science chanced to be well served with indexes, so that three botanists, working independently, happened to dig out these results at about the same time, verified and expanded the experiments, and established what is now the Mendelian Theory. Putting this into practice has greatly increased the yield of cereals and fruits, has raised the value of horses and herds, and is of much promise as to Man. To determine the actual value of periodical articles, the librarian would need to have abundant time, to keep all current knowledge at his fingers' ends, and to have the gift of prophecy. Apparently all he really can do is to preserve as much original work as he can find room for, and to keep up full and accurate indexes. What will prove useful, and when, is beyond the scope of foresight.

Thomas J. Homer

Mr. Thomas J. Homer, compiler and editor of the new Union List (with Subject Index) of Current Serials received in this vicinity, in course of publication by the Boston Public Library, reported progress upon the work, especially by way of contributions of titles from many different libraries.

About fifty libraries are co-operating in the sending of titles, and as the co-operating organizations include not only the leading general libraries, but a large number of special libraries, it is believed that the great assemblage of titles will be notably comprehensive. The General Committee of Direction consists of Mr. Lane of the Harvard College Library, Chairman, and of Mr. Belden of the State Library, Dr. Bigelow of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mr. Bolton of the Boston Athenaeum, Professor Cannon of the Harvard Medical School, Mr. Chevalier of the Boston Public Library, Dr. Farlow of the Boston Medical Library, Mr. Faxton of the Boston Book Company, Mr. Lee of the Stone & Webster Corporation, Mr. Rehder of the Arnold Arboretum, and Professor Tyler of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Coming now to the need of closer interworking and co-ordination of the libraries in this vicinity, Mr Homer laid especial stress upon the proposition to install and maintain in Boston a union catalogue of current accessions not only of periodicals

but also of books The modus operandi would be very simple. The libraries would co-operate to form what might be known as the Massachusetts Union Catalogue Association, and would contribute in appropriate proportions toward the installation and maintenance of a union catalogue of their more important accessions Each library would prepare two extra cards for each of these accessions. Such cards would be for the union catalogue, to be filed respectively under author and subject. The catalogue would rapidly expand and would soon become a decided convenience and timesaver. It would also be of great assistance toward the avoidance of unnecessary duplication, and, conversely, toward the acquirement of desiderata. The fact that fifty libraries have been willing to contribute the titles of one section of their accessions for the common good, suggests, reasonably enough, that many of these libraries probably would be willing considerably to extend the scope of their co-operation.

Ethel M. Johnson

Miss Ethel M. Johnson, Librarian of the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, presented the following paper on "Following Legislative Action:"

You may recall that passage in "Thro' the Looking Glass" where Alice and the Red Queen have been running themselves out of breath only to find they are just where they started. And to the exclamation of the astonished Alice the Queen replies that everything moves so swiftly there one has to exert oneself to the utmost to even keep in the same place.

I have come to feel there is some analogy between this experience and attempting to follow legislative action at the State House. Such extraordinary things happen there, and happen so quickly; events succeed one another with such alarming rapidity, one would need to be equipped with the fabled seven-league boots, and possess as many eyes as Argus, to really keep in touch with all that transpires under the gilded dome.

Fortunately my duties were far less pretentious in scope. It has been my work this session, as Secretary of the legislative committee of the Women's Educational Union, and in charge of the information service, to try to keep posted pretty accurately on the bills in which the Union was actively interested, and to follow as well as I could in odd moments the course of general social welfare legislation, particularly those measures with which the women's clubs were concerned.

There were really two phases to the work, direct legislative action, and legislative information. The two went together very nicely, however. Attendance at hearings and sessions of House and Senate, interviews and conference for campaign purposes, helped exceedingly in the news service, while the material collected and the machinery organized for that service contributed much to the active work.

For these two types of work two distinct types of information are required. For the purposes of legislative action, the printed tool, the information source that tells you what has happened when it is too late to change that happening, while interesting, is quite inadequate.

For such work it is essential to secure advance information, to get the kind of information that isn't apt to appear in printed form, as: "What will be the probable fate of a measure if it is referred to a given committee? What is likely to be the opposition to a given bill, and how could it be amended to gain more support?" This is the kind of information the legislative agent must try to secure And this can safely be secured only from authoritative sources.

For the general information service, for following what is really legislative history, there are adequate means. What we undertook at the Union this year was to give such information on social welfare measures, particularly those affecting women, to women's clubs and organizations. The clubs in general do not initiate legislation. They are interested, however, in legislative happenings, interested for club discussion and reports, and sometimes also for the purpose of co-operation in response to an appeal to help in supporting or opposing a given measure.

As a rule what they want to know is, who is the representative, or senator, or congressman, for a certain district? What is the date of hearings on certain measures, reports of committees, record of action in House and Senate? What are the provisions of a given bill, and how does it differ from existing legislation on the subject?

It was to meet this definite sort of inquiry as well as to provide machinery for our own legislative work, that the information service was started. The equipment is quite simple, and consists largely of the following material:

Revised laws and acts and resolves to date; a file of the bills of the session just ended dealing with social welfare matters, as well as a selected list of bills for several years back, with record of action on same; the daily journal of House and Senate; bulletin of committee hearings and legislative action; daily bulletin of hearings; daily calendar of both branches; and a number of special directories and reference tools, as the manual of the General Court, list of committees, list of members of the General Court, with their districts, biographical sketch of members, and legislative roll call for the preceding year.

In order to have information quickly available, we made up from these various sources a card list of the state representatives and senators, giving their addresses,

pertinent facts in their biographies, and their record on certain bills, if they had previously been in the legislature, also their districts, with the towns and wards included. Then these were cross indexed by senatorial and representative districts, and again by towns. So if the telephone inquiry came, who is the representative for Ludlow, it could be answered without delay.

The daily papers, particularly the Advertiser, which gives much prominence to legislative news, and such special publications as Practical Politics, and the departmental reports of the Commonwealth, supplemented the equipment.

We did not attempt to do much in the way of keeping in touch with Federal legislation, although we brought together some material on the subject: copies of bills of interest to women's clubs, as the Keating-Owen child labor bill, Smith-Hughes vocational education bill, etc.; and such reference tools as the Congressional Directory, Congressional Record, publications of the National Voters League, and certain labor legislation publications.

Most of the state material mentioned is easily obtainable. Some of the most valuable is to be had on application at the Legislative Document Room at the State House, and may be secured by mail or by messenger service. As timeliness is all important in legislative work, it is advisable to send a messenger or go oneself for material This last method is the more satisfactory arrangement, as it is possible then to get additional information, and often much more valuable information, at first hand from the Clerk of the House or Senate.

In business library work you are apt to consult individuals twice where you consult books once. In legislative work the proportion of persons to print is far greater. Some of these human sources are the agents or counsel of other organizations that are taking an active part in legislation, committee members known to be interested in a measure, and the senator or representative who has charge of a bill after it is reported.

Of course, there are other methods for getting some of this information, and it is frequently advisable to employ them when secondary sources will answer Arrangements can generally be made with one of the State House reporters for certain types of information. The Commonwealth Reports already mentioned conducts an information service for its members, subscribers, etc.

All of these means are valuable, but they do not take the place of the active work you must do for yourself. You can't depend on any agency or any individuals to volunteer the information you need. They may intend to do it, they may do it in certain instances; but the time they overlook you is just at the critical moment, when information for prompt action is imperative. The moral of all this is that in legislative work one has got to keep right on the business oneself, and that eternal vigilance is the price of legislative knowledge.

H. B. Alvord

Mr. H. B Alvord, of the Aberthaw Construction Company, said, in effect, that in any new propaganda it was always necessary to spread the information concerning it as widely as possible, and that this must be done by mutual interchange of ideas between people and associations However, there is a danger which is likely to be encountered in this line of propaganda, in that there will not be sufficient financial reserve, which will be of a permanent value, even though small at the beginning Money is the standard of value in all economic matters, and any propaganda which is to be of lasting value will necessarily take this into account

F. W. Faxon

Mr F. W. Faxon, of the Boston Book Company, in the discussion called attention to the very large collection of magazines that his company had, which could be consulted but not borrowed They are for sale in sets. He also noted that a library school is to make a checklist of indexes as a feature of thesis work.

A. D. Smith

Mr A. D. Smith, Secretary and Manager of the Information Clearing House of Boston, described the methods by which that organization gained its information, and mentioned in detail the well-known library tools and their relative value to the information service. From bibliographies he had less assistance than might be supposed and explained their lack of fitness for the purpose of the clearing house. This is because the information required is of a nature that calls for up-to-dateness as well as selection. The usual library bibliography is too frequently not comprehensive and usually of too old a date. Of the various indexes, major and minor, while they are in constant use and are indispensable, they do not necessarily cover the whole field. The system of the Bureau of building up a "where to look" was described, the end sought being to minimize as far as possible the haphazard method by which at present much of the information is sought. The great mass of important not-copyrighted material that is constantly coming from the press, mostly in the form of pamphlets, and which finds its way only in part to the libraries, was pointed out as a problem which it must be the task of the special librarians to solve.

The resolution of the meeting was to the effect that the matter of co-ordinating special libraries be left to the Information Clearing House, with the understanding that a later meeting be called, probably in the autumn, to hear its report